

Case Study

Our Lady of the Missions Primary School, Thornliebank

1 September 2017

Our Lady of the Missions Primary School in Thornliebank, near Glasgow has welcomed students back to a new academic year with the addition of a brand new 5 metre diameter Twinfix umbrella canopy. With benches fitted underneath it is part of the new outdoor learning space organised by the Parent Council.

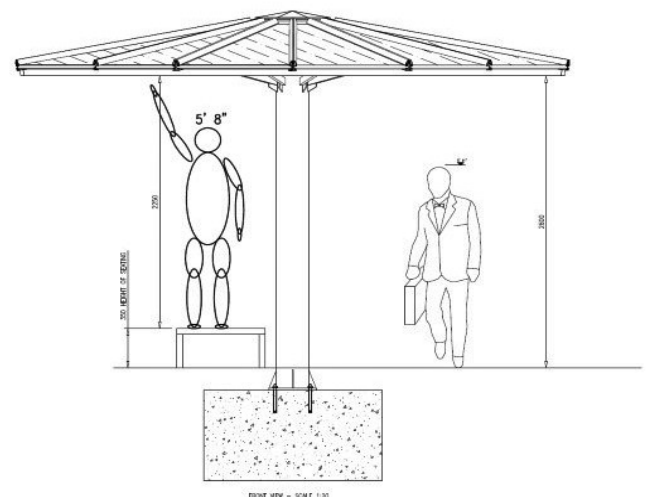
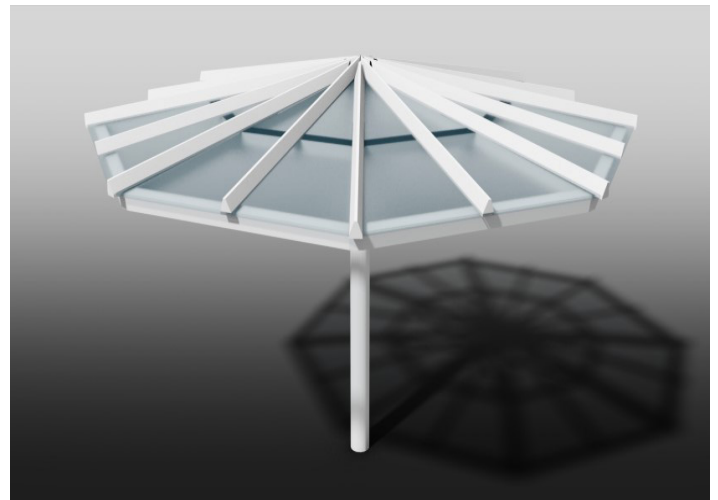
Working alongside Scotplay & Sports Ltd for East Renfrewshire Council, we designed, manufactured and installed this, our first umbrella canopy, in-house; using our own dedicated teams for each part of the task. Structural calculations indicated that the 5 metre diameter roof needed a central post manufactured from steel, plus a rather large foundation pot, reinforced with steel mesh. The octagonal roof consists of 25mm clear multiwall polycarbonate glazing fitted on to an aluminium frame. All the metalwork was powder coated to RAL 5101 blue. One of the school's safety requirements was that no child should be able to stand on a bench and touch the roof of the canopy so our Design team provided a cross-section drawing that showed how a 5'8" child could not reach the roof, as well as visuals of how the canopy would look once installed.

A standard part of our canopy manufacturing process is a dry-assembly run prior to powder coating the metal elements. This enables us to ensure that everything fits together easily, our aim being glitch-free site installation.

Although we planned on using a mechanical digger to create the foundation hole we actually ended up using spades as well, due to the appearance in our hole of foundations from an earlier building. It was quite a task! Once completed we left it for several days to allow the concrete to set firmly, during which time Scotplay & Sports installed artificial turf to the area.

Access to the canopy site round the school buildings was rather tight and the whole area was hilly, so getting installation equipment in and out was not the easiest of tasks – but we quite enjoyed the challenge. To lift the steel post into place we used a Genie SLA fitted with material slings, being careful not to damage the smart, newly laid artificial turf. Once the post was in place, we refitted the turf and the rest of the roof was installed very quickly.

The summer holiday also saw many parents helping out in the school grounds, spreading hundreds of sacks of bark, cutting up logs, and marking up the playgrounds. This is all Phase I of a very ambitious plan the Parent Council have to create a learning environment that will enable the children to develop a range of important physical, social and academic skills whilst having fun outdoors.



The area immediately under and around the canopy is now a designated outdoor classroom and with a role of 950 children it was decided that year groups from Primary 3, 4, 5 and 6 would be given a designated day each week when they could use the area during playtimes. During teaching time this rather different classroom may be booked for use by individual teachers

We think our first school umbrella canopy looks great. And it looks as if the children agree with us. We can't wait to see what Phase II of their scheme looks like!



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